



**Inclusion
Scotland**

Executive Summary: Survey Findings.

**No Clear Path:
Disabled People and the
Barriers to Fair Work**

Inclusion Scotland, a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO), conducted an online survey in June 2025 to gather the views of disabled people on the UK Government's Pathways to Work Green Paper. The proposals include significant reforms to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Universal Credit (UC), and the Work Capability Assessment (WCA).

While the sample size (22 respondents) was limited, the findings align closely with our other engagement work and highlight issues of broad concern to the disabled community.

Survey responses revealed an overwhelming consensus that the reforms will harm disabled people,

- increasing poverty
- worsening health
- creating further barriers to independence and employment.



Participants expressed profound anxiety about losing essential financial support, particularly PIP and UC's health element, which many rely on for basic living costs and disability-related expenses. The proposed "4 points in one category" rule for PIP eligibility was viewed as arbitrary, discriminatory, and likely to exclude people with complex or fluctuating conditions. Reductions to UC, especially for those under 21, were seen as unjust, with respondents stressing that disability can occur at any age and that living costs are not lower for younger people.

Some welcomed the removal of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to reduce duplication. However, most were concerned that relying solely on PIP criteria to assess work capability is inappropriate, as daily living activities do not measure the ability to sustain employment.

Many mistrusted the UK Government's stated "pro-work" intentions, perceiving the reforms as politically driven cost-cutting rather than genuine support. The real barriers to work identified were,

- employer discrimination
- inaccessible workplaces
- lack of flexible roles
- delays in Access to Work (AtW) support

Although AtW was recognised as vital, respondents described it as under-resourced, bureaucratic, and lacking disability expertise.

Respondents called for welfare reform to be co-produced with disabled people, grounded in dignity, fairness, and the social model of disability.

Recommendations for the UK Government

1. Stop the proposed eligibility restrictions and reductions to the health element of Universal Credit, as they risk increasing poverty, harming health, and excluding people from the labour market.
2. Co-produce with disabled people welfare reforms: in their design, testing, and evaluation.
3. Replace repetitive, stressful, and inaccurate assessments with one simple process.
4. Ensure fluctuating conditions are fairly assessed.
5. Invest in removing employment barriers, such as workplace discrimination, inaccessible transport, housing, and healthcare.
6. Reform Access to Work (AtW) by reducing waiting times and bureaucracy and by increasing funding and staff training.
7. Commit to challenging stereotypes, avoid offensive language, and promote the voices of disabled people.

While the focus is on the UK Government, we are also calling on the Scottish Government to further mitigate the harms from the proposed welfare changes.



Recommendations for the Scottish Government

1. Commit to protecting Adult Disability Payment (ADP) from the restrictive changes proposed in Westminster's PIP reforms, based on a human rights approach.
2. Strengthen employment support co-designed with DPOs, ensuring funding for skills training, supported employment, and employer incentives.
3. Work with the UK Government to devolve elements of AtW or develop a Scottish equivalent with faster processing, greater accessibility, and stronger employer engagement.
4. Prioritise accessible public services such as transport and adapted housing, to enable greater independent living and involvement in the labour market.
5. Lead by example by ensuring all Scottish Government roles are accessible, flexible, and inclusive.
6. Embed the social model of disability in policy and focus investment on barrier removal.
7. Promote positive representation by publicising disabled people's contributions, successes, and rights.



Overall, the survey highlights a fundamental disconnect between the lived experiences of disabled people and the UK Government's proposed reforms. The findings strongly indicate that the changes, as proposed, would not improve employment outcomes but instead risk deepening inequality, reducing independence, and undermining disabled people's rights.

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